

THURSDAY, JANUARY 27, 2022

# Courant Community

Courant Community | Thursday, January 27, 2022

LOCAL NEWS

## Ellington battles Windsor Locks



Ellington's Mike Bontempo takes to the air for two points. Story, more photos, pages 8-9. STEVE SMITH/COURANT COMMUNITY

LOCAL NEWS



Some of the many dishes available at Gyro Love. SUSAN DUNNE/HARTFORD COURANT

### Gyro Love and Pizza Pie expand

William Mutraji founded both chains in 2019 with the opening of the Cromwell location. **Page 3**

LOCAL NEWS

### Locals celebrating milestones

From a first birthday to a 37th birthday and everywhere in between, we wish them all the best. **Page 4**

LOCAL NEWS

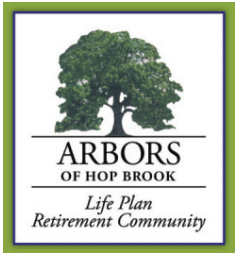
### East Hartford planned projects discussed

Mayor Michael Walsh hosted a meeting to present his ambitious plans for the future of the town. **Page 5**

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## Society presents program on genealogy

ENFIELD — WINDSOR — Join renowned international genealogist Sandra Taitt-Eaddy for a three-part workshop series designed to demystify the process for finding your roots, inside and outside the United States. Discover the importance of oral traditions, identify unique family exploration resources, and receive professional guidance for the journey of creating your more complete family tree.

Windsor Historical Society will host this virtual program, *Seek and Ye Shall Find: African American and Caribbean Genealogy*, in three parts via Zoom from 2 to 3:30 p.m. on three successive Saturdays: Feb. 5, 12, and 19.

The programs will feature information on recovering oral traditions and family lore, exploring record groups, repositories, and ancestral databases, and creating and growing your own family tree.

Advanced registration is required for the program. The registration fee is \$10 per session or \$25 for the complete workshop series. Visit [windsorhistoricalsociety.org/eaddy-genealogy1](http://windsorhistoricalsociety.org/eaddy-genealogy1) to register. For more information, contact the Society at [info@windsorhistoricalsociety.org](mailto:info@windsorhistoricalsociety.org) or 860-688-3813.

## Hero hounds ready to become forever companions

BLOOMFIELD — For adoptable dogs Beau and Wilson, puppyhood was far from ordinary. These two-year-old hounds dedicated the beginning of their lives to veterinary research, and for the past few months have been living in foster homes provided by Dog Star Rescue, a Bloomfield rescue organization.

Starting their lives in a medical facility, they each played an integral role in changing the way veterinarians treat pets that suffer from shock and traumatic bleeding by acting as blood donors. Now, these impressive boys are looking for their forever homes.

Unfortunately, much like the start of

their lives, the adoption process has not been simple for Beau and Wilson. Because they have specific needs, these two dogs have been awaiting their best-fit owners for months. Due to their unique beginning, they can be timid, mistrusting or uncomfortable in new surroundings. Despite all they've experienced however, they are both incredibly loving and loyal, and will make amazing pets for the right families.

"Wilson has learned to trust humans over the past three months and has discovered that the real world isn't so scary after all," said Nicole Rodier, Wilson's foster parent. "He is such a good boy that would make the perfect companion for a low key family that will take him on lots of fun adventures."

Both dogs are looking for patient, experienced owners who live in calm and mature households so they can live like the beloved pets that they dedicated their youth to saving. Visit [DogStarRescue.org](http://DogStarRescue.org) for more information. Dog Star Rescue, based in Bloomfield, is a non-profit organization that places stray, abandoned, shelter, and owner-surrender dogs of all breeds and ages into qualified, caring, life-long homes.

## Library offering library card sign-up promotion

WINDSOR LOCKS — February is National Library Lovers' Month and the Windsor Locks Library is offering a library card sign-up promotion all month long.

Those with expired cards or who are in need of a card are invited to stop by the library, 28 Main St., starting Feb. 1, for a chance to win an air fryer and accompanying cookbook. New registrants receive three raffle tickets and renewals receive one ticket. To be eligible for the raffle, participants must check out at least one item using the new card.

Participants can also self-register online at [www.windsorlockslibrary.org](http://www.windsorlockslibrary.org) for a temporary digital library card and call the library at 860-627-1495 to confirm that they have checked out an ebook to be entered into the raffle.

## Friday Films taking place at the Enfield Library

ENFIELD — Friday Films at the Enfield Library, 104 Middle Road, will take place in February and March. Visit [enfieldpubliclibrary.org](http://enfieldpubliclibrary.org) or call 860-763-7512 for more information.

On Feb. 4, the movie is about a veteran who goes from town to town to share news from all around the world. In one of his stops, he meets a 10-year-old girl who has been living with the Kiowa people for the last six years. When she is ordered to return to her family, Kidd decides to accompany her.

On Feb. 18, the underappreciated personal assistant to a superstar singer seizes the opportunity to revitalize her boss's languishing career—and to realize her childhood dream of becoming a music producer.

On March 4, a family man contends with the unthinkable when his daughter calls him from a French prison, revealing that she has been charged with murder. Determined to prove his daughter's innocence to the French courts and secure her freedom he embarks on an odyssey from rural Oklahoma to France driven by paternal instinct.

On March 18, follow the rise of Aretha's career from a young child singing in her father's church choir to her international superstardom. This is the remarkable true story of the music icon's journey to find her voice and become the Queen of Soul.

Films are free and everyone is welcome. Masks are required. Movies start at 2 p.m. and there is no need to register.

## Somers Veteran Coffeehouse showing documentary

SOMERS — Veterans are invited to a special showing of USMC Noah Cass's documentary, "Tougher Than a Tank" at the Somers Veterans' Coffeehouse in the Somers Town Hall Auditorium, 600 Main St.

The movie will be shown from 8:30 to 11 a.m. Noah Cass, a Somers native, will be present for a portion of the film to meet

attendees. Seating is available on a first come, first served basis.

Contact the Somers Department of Veterans Affairs for additional information at 860-272-4207 or 860-604-0634.

## Special Olympics presents Penguin Plunge events statewide

STATEWIDE — Registration is open for Special Olympics Connecticut's upcoming Penguin Plunge events. Visit [soct.org](http://soct.org) for more information.

Participants in the Plunge will jump into the chilly waters of a lake or Long Island Sound to support the organization's year-round sports, health and fitness programs for athletes around the state and help create communities that accept and include people of all abilities.

Visit [soct.org](http://soct.org), email [specialolympicsct@soct.org](mailto:specialolympicsct@soct.org) or call 203-230-1201 for more information. Upcoming Penguin Plunge events include the Farmington Penguin Plunge at Winding Trails on Sunday, Feb. 13; the Middletown Penguin Plunge at the Polish Falcons Club on Saturday, Feb. 26; the Shoreline Penguin Plunge at Ocean Beach Park in New London on Sunday, March 6; the Fairfield Penguin Plunge at Jennings Beach on Saturday, April 2; and Plunge at the Park at Wolfe Park in Monroe on Saturday, April 2.

## FUMC seeking donations for Network Against Domestic Abuse

VERNON — STAFFORD SPRINGS — The Women's Ministry of First United Methodist Church-Stafford Springs is asking for help from the local communities in its annual collection of items for The Network Against Domestic Abuse.

The collection drive will run until Sunday, March 6. First United Methodist Church is located at 8 Church St. The agency has a large wishlist for items to support Julie's Safe House. A few of the items needed are new women's under-

*Turn to Community News, Page 4*

# Courant Community

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### News and content submissions

Contact Courant Community Editor Erin Quinlan at 860-875-3366, Ext. 3030 or [equinlan@courant.com](mailto:equinlan@courant.com).

Send press releases, community events and photos, news tips or letters to the editor to [community@courant.com](mailto:community@courant.com).

To submit Good Neighbor items, birthday greetings, engagement or wedding announcements, email [community@courant.com](mailto:community@courant.com).

Send news items by mail to Courant Community, PO Box 569, Hartford, CT 06141-0569, or by fax to 860-875-9552.

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# Two restaurants under one roof: Gyro Love and Pizza Pie expand to Glastonbury

By Susan Dunne  
Hartford Courant

Gyro Love, a fast-casual chain of Greek-inspired restaurants in Connecticut, has opened its fifth location, this one at 2941 Main St. in Glastonbury.

The restaurants serve American-Mediterranean fusion food. The Glastonbury, Southington and Cromwell locations have a second restaurant inside the building called Pizza Pie, which serves pizzas, flatbreads, wings and salads. The other locations are in Bristol and Newington.

William Mutraji of Farmington founded both chains in 2019 with the opening of the Cromwell location.

“They’re two separate businesses, two brands. I thought it was a good idea, something for everyone, like a mall. If the kids want pizza and the parents want Greek food or a healthy salad, it will make them all happy,” he said. “It’s not Greek pizza, it’s Italian.” The kitchens are separate.

Mutraji said the Gyro Love recipes are traditional Mediterranean — gathered from his travels to Greece, Lebanon and Turkey — but with adaptations to make them more attractive to American palates.

Gyro Love serves gyro sandwiches with shrimp, falafel or the house gyro meat (beef and lamb); hummus; stuffed grape leaves; and salads.

The shop also sells gyro bowls. Each offers a base of skin-on French fries, rice or salad; a protein of chicken, shrimp, falafel or the house gyro meat; and a side of hummus, eggplant hummus or tzatziki. Baklava is sold for dessert.

One standout on the menu is the Greek fries, a huge portion of skin-on French fries with feta, oregano and olive oil and drizzled

with lemon, so cheesy it must be eaten with a fork.

“It sounds weird, lemon on fries, but it tastes good,” he said.

The other four locations also sell chicken, gyro meat or lamb chop platters; crostini; gyro meat pizza; baked feta with sliced bread; tapas platters; veggie platters; the “grill mix” with a variety of proteins; and a two-people combo with a combination of meats and appetizers.

Mutraji said after the Glastonbury staff gets up to speed with the rhythm of the restaurant and the computer systems, he will add those dishes to the menu there.

The new store, which had its soft opening Jan. 7 and will host a grand opening in the spring, has tables and chairs but is primarily geared toward takeout. Ordering can be done online, in kiosks in the store and at the store’s counter. Everything is served in takeout containers even for those who want to eat in.

Mutraji said that if all goes well and the supply-chain slowdowns — which delayed the opening of the Glastonbury location by about three months — ease up, he hopes to open six to 10 more Gyro Loves around the state by the end of the year.

“So far it is going really well,” Mutraji said. “The customers are really coming out.”

All of the stores are open Monday to Thursday 11 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Friday and Saturday 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.; and Sunday noon to 8 p.m.

The other stores addresses are 751 Terryville Ave. in Bristol; 136 Berlin Road in Cromwell; 832 Queen St. in Southington; and 337 Willard Ave. in Newington.

More information at gyro.love and wood-firedpizzapie.com.

Susan Dunne can be reached at [sdunne@courant.com](mailto:sdunne@courant.com).



The Glastonbury location of Gyro Love has a second restaurant inside the building called Pizza Pie, which serves pizzas, flatbreads, wings and salads. **SUSAN DUNNE / THE HARTFORD COURANT**

ORTHOPEDIC UPDATE

“Dr. Daniel is highly qualified for hip and knee replacement surgery”

— ROBERT McALLISTER, MD



CHAD DANIEL, MD  
Orthopedic Surgeon

ROBERT McALLISTER, MD  
Orthopedic Surgeon

Chad Daniel, MD recently joined Hartford Orthopedic Surgeons and has unique fellowship training in advanced robotic joint replacement surgery. He is passionate about customizing the right treatment plan for his patients, whether it be physical therapy, medications, or joint replacement surgery. For an appointment call (860) 525-4469.



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## LOCAL NEWS

## Community News

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wear, bras, socks, pajamas, sweatshirts, sweatpants, women's leggings, (including plus sizes), diapers, laundry supplies, toilet paper, paper towels, facial tissue, paper plates and cups, dishwasher detergent, flashlights and batteries, juice boxes, coffee, tea, cocoa, snacks, hand sanitizer, disposable masks, body wash, and deodorant.

Due to health restrictions, they are only able to accept new clothing and supplies. For a full list of needed items and information for hours of drop off, contact Tanya at [tanbuc64@gmail.com](mailto:tanbuc64@gmail.com) or 860-209-8024.

## SW Veterans Banner Program seeking nominees

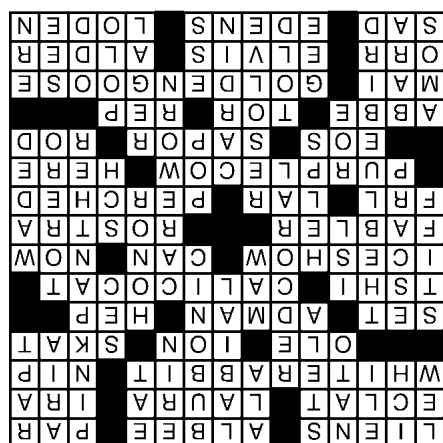
**SOUTH WINDSOR** — The South Windsor Veterans Banner Program recognizes veterans living in the community, for their service. The program is overseen by the South Windsor Patriotic Commission and a student from Timothy Edwards Middle School, whose idea conceived the project.

The organizers strongly believe it is important for current and future generations to understand how sacrifices made by veterans enable the freedoms of today.

To date, 22 veterans from WWII and the Korean and Vietnam Wars have been honored with banners displayed from Memorial Day through Veterans Day at the South Windsor Community Center.

Plans are underway for 2022 nominees. If you are a veteran or know of any veteran from these eras who is a current resident of South Windsor and willing to be nominated, call Patriotic Commission members Herb Asplund at 860-644-0881 or Daria Plummer at 860-432-8403.

## CROSSWORD ANSWERS FOR TODAY'S PUZZLE



Visit <https://earthblogger.wixsite.com/ybp2021> for more information.

## Snowshoe hike taking place at Great Meadows

GLASTONBURY — The Land Heritage Coalition of Glastonbury, Inc. will lead its annual snowshoe hike on Sunday, Jan. 30, through the Glastonbury side of the Great Meadows. Meet at 1 p.m. in the parking lot at the Glastonbury side Ferry Landing (Ferry Lane/Route 160).

"This has been a popular hike with a great turnout in past years, and we expect this one to be no different," said hike leader Rich Sawitzke. "No worries about snow, we'll hike that day with or without snow."

The LHC is a non-profit corporation whose mission is to support farming, open space preservation, and water and wetlands protection. As part of their educational mission, the LHC sponsors a series of walks throughout the fall and winter.

The hike begins at 1 p.m. at the Glastonbury Ferry Landing on the Connecticut River. The plan is to take the small park loop trail, then branch out into some of the Great Meadows farmland property north of the landing. The length of the hike will be determined by weather and snow conditions and the interest of the group.

Attendees are encouraged to bring their snowshoes, if they have them. While the hike is relatively level and considered easy to moderate, participants should be agile enough to wear snowshoes — or navigate deep snow in boots — if conditions warrant.

The Rocky Hill-Glastonbury Ferry, which will not be running at the time of the hike, is a seasonal ferry crossing the Connecticut River, and is part of Route 160. It is believed to be the oldest continuously operated ferry service in the United States.

The ferry landings and the ferry itself are included in the Glastonbury-Rocky Hill Ferry Historic District, which was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2005.

This hike is open to the public and is free of charge. There will be beverages served at the end. Covid-19 Protocol: Organizers encourage all participants to be fully vaccinated against Covid-19. They suggest those who are not vaccinated wear a mask for the health and safety of all attending.

Contact Charley Smith for hike information or in case of inclement weather at 860-508-1844. Visit [www.lhcglastonbury.org](http://www.lhcglastonbury.org) for more information on the Land Heritage Coalition of Glastonbury.

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# HAPPY BIRTHDAY

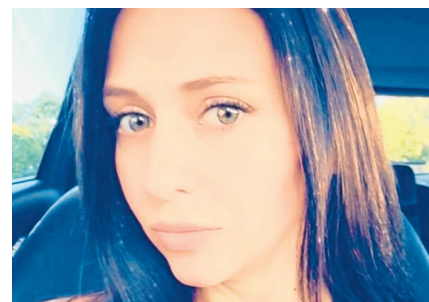
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**Happy 11th Birthday, Edward (1/27):** “You are amazing and deserve the best in life. Love, Grandma.”



**Happy 2nd Birthday, Elena (1/28):** “Your smile is the most enchanting, precious thing in the world. Love, Mom, Dad, Lorenzo, Igor.”



**Happy 37th Birthday, Leanne (1/30):**  
 “You’re amazing! Lily, Gigi, Ava, Aries, Apollo,  
 and Mr. Todd.”



**Happy 23rd Birthday, Tommy (1/26):**  
"Hope you have an amazing day! We love you! XOXO."



**Happy 3rd Birthday, Avery (1/20):** "You are the sunshine of our lives. Love, Gigi and Grandpa."



**Happy 11th Birthday, Jai (2/28):** "You are the twinkle of our eyes. Love from, Mama, Baba, and Dada."



**Happy 1st Birthday, Jackson (1/25):** "We love you and you always make us smile. Love, Grandpa and Grandma-Lynn."



**Happy 6th Birthday, Atharva (1/28):**  
 "Wish you lots of happiness. Keep smiling.  
 Love, Mom and Dad."



## LOCAL NEWS

# East Hartford mayor highlights planned projects in town hall meeting

By Steve Smith  
Courant Community

EAST HARTFORD — East Hartford's newly-elected Mayor Michael Walsh hosted a town hall meeting to present his ambitious plans for the future of the town, focusing on several development projects, on Jan. 19.

The meeting was both in-person and online, and included questions from the audience.

The presentation included several projects, including rehabilitation of several buildings and commercial areas, repurposing some existing buildings, and creating some new developments.

Among the new ideas is a request for proposal for a sports bubble, which would be a public-private partnership.

"We'll be seeking people who want to run either a sports bubble or a youth center on behalf of the town," Walsh said. "I would like no better than to come to the table with a tax-exempt checkbook and work with a local entrepreneur to work out a 20-year operating agreement."

Walsh said that he hopes to see sports programs and championships return to East Hartford, as they did years ago, before the town's programs' pace fell behind that of other towns.

Road renovations are also on the table, which Walsh said is the town's greatest needs. The town spends approximately \$5 million per year on rehabbing local roads.

"We'd like to try to double that to \$10 million," Walsh said. "We have a number of large roads - Burnham Street and Long Hill Street - that are planned for 2023 that will eat that up, in and of itself. But, we want to get to some of those roads that haven't been touched."

Town hall itself is also in the mayor's plans, and will need a refit of its HVAC infrastructure.

"The town hall you're sitting in," the mayor told attendees, "will need to close from about August 2022 to August of 2023. The heating and cooling is beyond repair."

Walsh explained that town hall is essentially three buildings built in 1938, sometime in the 1950s, and 1968, and that building needs entirely new heating/cooling systems, new electrical work, and a new roof. Asbestos and lead remediation is also needed and the cupola needs rehabilitation. There are options as to how to approach the work.

"We could do what they call a rolling renovation, where we keep sections of town hall open for six to eight months at a time," Walsh said. "This is \$13 million and would impact workers and residents for two whole years. If we simply close it down, using the lessons we've learned from COVID, we will have some workers working remotely, we'll have some workers relocated from from town hall at the community and cultural center, and it will cost \$11 million. We could potentially save \$2



East Hartford Mayor Michael Walsh presented plans for town's future at a Town Hall meeting, including developments on Silver Lane, improvements at local parks, and major renovations at town hall. **COURTESY PHOTO**

million and save a year."

Repairs and upgrades to town parks are also in the mayor's vision. The former "catwalk" bridge that brought pedestrians from the Columbus Circle neighborhood to McAuliffe Park fell apart due to age and disrepair. Currently, people travel through two holes in fences on both sides of the train tracks.

Walsh said that the town will be working with the DOT on an at-grade crossing that will allow pedestrians to cross the tracks and get to the park.

One of the largest projects, Walsh said, is a monthly newsletter that will go out to subscribed residents, informing them on all of the ongoing and proposed projects, and other town news. The newsletter will be available in more than 100 languages.

"What we have here in East Hartford is a richly diverse community," Walsh said, "and yet, we all don't talk the same language. People don't understand what our ordinances say, including when to put your trash out and when to put your bulky waste out. This will be available to everybody... so that we can begin to have a discussion about where we move this community."

Communication with state legislators, as well as commercial and other partners - including Goodwin University and the Hoffman Auto Group - in order to help align the town's plans with those of its businesses and property owners, is important to the cohesiveness of the town's future, Walsh said.

"We want to start looking down the road to make East Hartford the very best community we can be," he said. "I believe East Hartford's glass is half full."

For more information, visit [www.easthartfordct.gov](http://www.easthartfordct.gov).



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# Future of Hartford's 'Bushnell South' takes shape with master plan for key property

By **Kenneth R. Gosselin**  
Hartford Courant

HARTFORD — Hartford's Bushnell South — a long envisioned redevelopment of a jumble of parking lots east of The Bushnell Center for the Performing Arts — is taking shape as a developer outlines a multiyear plan for a key corner across from Bushnell Park.

Spinnaker Real Estate Partners of Norwalk expects to begin a \$63 million conversion of the historic, 1926 building at 55 Elm St. — once offices for the state attorney general and other Constitutional officers — by the end of March. Plans call for 160 apartments, co-working space and a restaurant for the structure that faces Pulaski Circle, the first phase of the development.

But a larger, master plan submitted to the city rounds out the vision for both the building and the parking lots that surround it on the northeastern corner of the Bushnell South area. The area is bisected by Capitol Avenue.

Spinnaker sees new apartment buildings with storefront space on the those parking lots, first along West Street and later along Capitol Avenue. The new buildings, both five stories high, would bring another 166 apartments to the downtown area.

In the last decade, 2,000 apartments have been added in and around downtown, the majority in converted and sometimes, vacant and rundown office buildings. Hundreds more are planned for the near future.

Low-interest loans from the Capital Region Development Authority have figured significantly into the funding, including a \$13.5 million loan for 55 Elm. The loans are backed by state taxpayers and funded through the sale of state bonds.

But downtown apartment development is starting to enter a new phase, with new construction playing a bigger role. The massive, North Crossing — formerly DoNo — project and Bushnell South are prime examples.

In June, a CRDA unveiled a master plan for the entire Bushnell South area. The area could include more than 1,000 apartments, pedestrian promenades, shops, restaurants and entertainment venues.

And now, as the 55 Elm project gears up, CRDA, which has led planning for Bushnell

South redevelopment, said it hopes to seek proposals by the end of March for one of the largest lots just east of the historic and recently renovated State Office Building at 165 Capitol Ave.

The conversion of 55 Elm is one of the first in Bushnell South, following the construction of the recently completed, publicly financed \$16 million parking garage. The garage will be used by state employees, the public and as the first step toward “district” parking for the area.

Matt Edvardsen, a principal at Spinnaker and director of asset management, said the apartment conversion of the 1926 structure, which includes an annex, is expected to take about two years.

It is likely that midway or so through the conversion, a second phase along West Street will get underway. Those plans call for 81 rentals and storefront space.

Another 85 units are also planned later along Capitol Avenue, though the timing is not yet known, Edvardsen said.

“The market is going to dictate how quickly we are going to be able to build these,” Edvardsen said. “Some time after [the first two] buildings are delivered and leased up, we will start the project along Capitol.”

Edvardsen said it is still too soon to say how much additional phases will cost. Spinnaker is likely to seek funding through CRDA and a “tax-fixing” agreement with the city.

The plans call for “green spaces” and walkways among the buildings and residential amenities such as a pool and deck.

Edvardsen said the smaller annex to the larger 1926 building will also be converted to rentals, with a ground floor that may hold a destination such as a brewery, distillery, bakery or coffee roasterie.

Spinnaker, which also is developing the long-vacant corner of Park and Main streets in Hartford for apartments, said it is still bullish about building more rentals in the city.

“From what we understand, most of the comparable buildings downtown and just outside of downtown are fairly leased up and with occupancies in the mid-90s, and that’s the sign of a pretty healthy market,” Edvardsen said.

*Kenneth R. Gosselin can be reached at kgosselin@courant.com.*



CVS Health is piloting a transportation program with Uber Health to give eligible Hartford-area residents rides to doctor appointments and workforce training. **ELISE AMENDOLA | AP**

## CVS Health to offer free rides to eligible Hartford area residents for doctor visits and workforce training programs

By **Kenneth R. Gosselin**  
Hartford Courant

HARTFORD — CVS Health Corp., the pharmacy and health insurance giant, said it will launch a pilot program in the Hartford area on Feb. 1 that will provide free rides to eligible residents for doctor visits, workforce development or educational programs.

CVS has partnered with Uber Health, Uber's health care division, to provide the rides to clients of the Chrysalis Center, the Hartford-based nonprofit that provides social services.

The rides will be coordinated through Chrysalis Center and it is expected that as many as 1,500 residents could be eligible. Free rides would be provided to such services as vaccination appointments, workforce training programs and medical visits.

Initially, Chrysalis Center will be given \$25,000 in the program and clients will be given vouchers to pay for the rides. When the pilot ends, the program will be evaluated for additional funding.

In addition to Hartford, the transportation program is being piloted in Atlanta and Columbus, Ohio and is expected to be expanded into more cities later this year.

CVS, the parent of Hartford-based health insurer Aetna Inc., said the pilot program is part of its “Health Zones” initiative that seeks to reduce health care inequities in

communities where residents don't have easy access to medical care.

“By working with Hartford-based organizations and Uber Health, we will address key social determinants of health, including transportation, giving people in need access to health care services so they can live healthier lives and access to jobs and educational programs that can help them reach their full potential,” said Eileen Howard Boone, senior vice president of corporate social responsibility and philanthropy.

The push to create Health Zones comes as CVS and other health care companies and insurers are challenged to do something about the skyrocketing cost of health care across the country.

The Health Zones initiative targets what CVS sees as the six social “determinants” of better health: housing, education, access to food, labor, transportation and health care.

Since 2013, CVS said it has invested \$14.8 million in affordable housing in Hartford, and the health zones provide “wraparound services” where people can find healthful food and jobs along with health care.

In addition to Chrysalis Center, the Health Zones initiative will work on separate with other community-based organizations in Hartford such as the Charter Oak Health Center, Connecticut Food Bank/Foodshare, KNOX and YWCA Hartford.

*Kenneth R. Gosselin can be reached at kgosselin@courant.com.*



# GOOD NEIGHBOR

Your reader-to-reader column

## FREE

**RADIATOR COVERS:** Two wooden radiator covers. 63" wide x 10" deep, 80" wide x 10" deep. Both 21" high. 860-888-9673.

**SNOW TIRES:** Size 225/50R17. Good tread. 860-875-7140. Leave a message.

**ENCYCLOPEDIA SET:** Collier's. Excellent condition. 860-875-7140. Leave a message.

**EXERCISE BIKE:** Stamina Model 5300U exercise bike with computer programs. 860-872-6266.

## QUESTIONS

**FOUND:** Baseball Card in protective plastic cover found in Marlborough, Connecticut in 2014, unintentionally tucked away, and recently uncovered. Send an email to cs-137@outlook.com with an accurate description of the card, and we'll get it back to the owner.

**CLOWNS:** Seeking clowns of all sizes to cheer up a sick child. Contact Ron at 860-613-0860.

**TILES:** Seeking 115 ceramic tiles, two inches by two inches. Any color. 860-432-8050.

**SEEKING TO RENT:** At least 1,500 to 2,000 sq. ft. of cold storage. Rocky at 860-490-3816 or 860-872-6269.

**RECORDS:** Seeking classical music vinyl albums for record player. 860-680-1299.

**DRONE FOUND:** Vicinity of Elm St & Courtney Drive, Rocky Hill. Text with description for return. 860-402-2655.

**FOUND EYEGLASSES:** Eyeglasses found on Carriage Drive, Manchester. 860-646-4242.

**CPAP Machine:** Senior in need of an inexpensive but working CPAP machine. 860-512-0684.

**AUTO MECHANIC:** Seeking auto mechanic to repair pickup truck. Am senior citizen, phone with reasonable price. 860-796-6132.

**FURNITURE:** Seeking a light wooden chest having five drawers in good condition. Call after 5 p.m. 860-665-0141.

**LOST BRACELET:** Bracelet lost at ALDIs of Rocky Hill by carriages. It was a birthday gift. Call if found. 860-778-8556.

**PUZZLE SWAP:** Will meet halfway if too far to go. Have 20, most new. 860-568-1378.

**SEEKING ITEMS FOR GAS ENGINE:** Need flywheel and electric starter for 8 H.P. Briggs and Stratton gas engine. 860-633-5329.

**SEEKING:** Small boat trailer for a 12' boat, will buy. 860-741-2633.

**NECKLACE FOUND:** On Carillon Drive, Rocky Hill. Call with description for return. 860-965-6672. Messages will be returned.

**SNOW SHOVELING HELP:** Senior looking for an individual to shovel out parking space and clean off car after snow storms in Collinsville. 860-305-6701.

**CAR:** Seeking automobile to help out with transportation in 2022. Elderly with low Social Security. 860-515-1488.

**LAPTOPS:** Collecting used or new laptops from kind donors. These laptops will be donated to school kids in Ghana. Contact Ben, 423-676-8815.

**NAUTICAL ROPE:** Looking for free ½- or ¾-inch nautical rope for DIY projects. 860-490-8956.

**PROPANE:** Seeking propane Salamander. Will pay a reasonable price. 860-749-2190.

## LAWN MOWING, SNOW REMOVAL:

Does anyone know of someone who mows grass and/or plows snow? 860-289-0101 after 5 p.m.

**CAR:** Seeking a donated good running car for elderly person in Putnam for doctor appointments. Cannot afford one. 508-335-5060. Leave a message.

## Be a good neighbor

To submit, send an email to [community@courant.com](mailto:community@courant.com) or mail to 285 Broad St., Hartford, CT 06115. Good Neighbor is a service by Courant Community. Questions and answers are provided by our readers and are not verified. Medical information cannot be published. Caution should be exercised at all times. The publisher is not responsible for damage to any person or property.

# Community News

from Page 4

## Author event, game night taking place at Manchester Library

MANCHESTER — Larry Rifkin Rifkin was the programming executive for Connecticut Public Television (CPTV) for over a quarter of a century, from 1986 to 2009. He wrote "No Dead Air" about his experiences working at the station. He will share tales from his career at 7 p.m. Monday, Jan. 31, at Manchester Public Library, 586 Main St.

Copies of his book will be available for purchase and signing. No registration is required for this free event for adults.

Under his leadership, CPTV amassed over 50 Emmy Awards in the Boston/New England competition. Rifkin was inducted into the Boston/New England Silver Circle in 2006. This is the regional television equivalent of a Lifetime Achievement Award.

He was a skilled on air presenter on CPTV and returned to his radio roots full-time back in 2010 as host of "Talk of the Town" on WATR 1320 for a seven year period. He now hosts the podcast, [americatrendspodcast.com](http://americatrendspodcast.com), where he looks at changes in society and politics. Visit <http://library.townofmanchester.org> or call 860-643-2471 for more information.

The Silk City Board Game Group will meet from noon to 4:30 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 5, at the Manchester Public Library. Volunteers will teach Burple Bros. 2, Ark Nova, Mandala Stones and Terraforming Mars: Ares Expedition. The library will provide the games.

This is a free program for adults. Light refreshments to be served. No registration is required for this event. Visit <http://library.townofmanchester.org> for more information.

## Hillstown Grange hosting soup, garden seed event; pancake breakfast

EAST HARTFORD — The Hillstown Grange, 617 Hills St., is holding a homemade soup and garden seed event on Thursday, Feb. 3. Doors open at 6 p.m. for a take-out dinner of homemade soups for \$5. The snow date is Feb. 10.

All gardeners are invited to the Agricultural Committee's free seeds giveaway and announcement of this year's gardening contests for the Sept. 10 Agricultural Fair. Over 300 seed packets are available to choose from and are limited to 12 packets per person. Admission is free.

Seeds were donated so there is no charge while they last. Bring your favorite seed catalogs to share. Master Gardeners will be announcing upcoming gardening classes.

Organizers are taking all Covid safety precautions and may restrict the number of people in the hall and time spent. Masks are required. Doors close at 7:30 p.m.

The Grange's mid-winter pancake breakfast will take place from 8:30 to 11 a.m. Saturday, Feb. 5. The menu will feature pancakes, sausage, coffee, tea and juice, all for \$5 for adults and \$3 for children 14 and under.

This month's specials feature blueberry pancakes with warm blueberry sauce and lemon pancakes. The upstairs hall now has a library which has opened with a special area for reading, playing games, or just visiting with old friends. Books are available for a donation to the building fund. Call Frank at 860-690-2845 or e-mail [hillstowngrange@aol.com](mailto:hillstowngrange@aol.com) for more information.

## Risley Park hike taking place in February

VERNON — The public is invited to a free 1.5-mile hike on Saturday, Feb. 5, starting at 1 p.m. at Risley Park, 366 Lake St., a parking lot just east of the pond.

Risley Park spans 155.3 acres in Vernon and Bolton, and hosts a section of the Shenipsit Trail, part of the Blue Trail system of the Connecticut Forest and Park Association. The property includes several trails, a former apple orchard, farmland, pond, dam, and meadow.

The hike will be moderately paced over rough and steep terrain, with some wet spots. Hikers should wear sturdy shoes or boots, bring hiking poles if they have them, and expect to be on the trail for about 90 minutes. No dogs and extreme weather cancels.

Visit [www.manchesterlandtrust.org](http://www.manchesterlandtrust.org) for more information or to check on the weather. The hike is co-sponsored by the Manchester Land Conservation Trust, which owns the property, along with the Manchester Water Department and the CT Forest and Park Association. Families and children are welcome.

## The Love On Band to perform

ROCKVILLE — Jacob's Well Coffeehouse, downtown Rockville's monthly Christian nightclub, will feature The Love On Band from Ellington on Friday, Feb. 4. Doors open at 7 p.m. with live music starting at 7:30 p.m. The event will be held either in the Union Church sanctuary or The Oasis storefront at 3 Elm St., depending on appropriate Coronavirus precautions. Admission is free and dress is casual.

The Love On Band features Kurt Ruckersfeldt on bass, Danny Petrozza on vocals and keyboards, and Mike Savelyev on acoustic guitar. The band's music is a mix of contemporary Christian music to ballads, country, gospel, praise and worship.

Petrozza serves as a deacon, singer and keyboardist at Ellington Baptist Church. Savelyev is the associate pastor and worship leader at Somers Baptist Church. Ruckersfeldt, an accomplished bass player nationally, is a deacon and lead bassist for the worship team at Ellington Baptist Church.

The event will also be live streamed and archived on the "Jacobs Well Coffeehouse" YouTube Channel. For details, visit [www.JacobsWellCoffeehouse.com](http://www.JacobsWellCoffeehouse.com) or call 860-871-6500. In case of bad weather, a cancellation notice will be broadcast on WFSB-TV 3.

## Library Friends to meet in February

Turn to Community News, Page 10



# Knights get comeback win over Raiders

By **Steve Smith**  
Courant Community

ELLINGTON — Although they didn't lead in the game until just more than five minutes remaining in the fourth quarter, the Ellington Knights rallied and took a deficit to a 10-point win over Windsor Locks, on Jan. 18.

With standout junior Jaydon Buckle leading the way, the Raiders got out to a lead early, and seemed to counter every Ellington point with one or more of their own, going into the locker room at the half up 27-20.

The Knights came out more aggressively in the second half, slowly narrowing the gap and taking a 35-34 lead with 5:07 remaining in the game. With 19 total points in the fourth quarter, Ellington didn't look back and finished the game 50-40 over Windsor Locks.

Raiders coach Dan Copes said Ellington definitely played harder in the second half and keyed on Buckle.

"They did some things to make us uncomfortable," he said. "They came out in the second half and wanted to push us around. We know with Jaydon out there, that's the recipe, and the message has gone out to the rest of the league."

But Ellington coach Robert Freitas said it wasn't so much about stopping Buckle, but forcing the other Raiders to try to make plays.

"We made some adjustments on matchups and it worked out well," he said. "I don't think it was taking [Buckle] out. He is going to get his. I think it was about making the other guys not beat us. Eventually, he can't do it all himself."

The Knights improved to 6-2 for the season and Windsor Locks fell to 3-4.

Freitas said his team's first half play was good, just didn't happen to supply enough offense.

"I thought, defensively, we were fine. We just didn't knock down enough shots," he said. "We need to continue to battle. I think we were much better in the second half, defensively, and we kept crawling back in."

Freitas said his team this year is made up of "good kids."

"They are just kids who never give up. They play until the end," Freitas said. "You can see it in the way they play. They play together and it's gotten some results for us so far."

Copes said he expects his team to improve, and will build upon the players' collective talents.

"One of the keys was our defense in the first half was outstanding," he said. "We held them to 20 points, and then we just didn't stay in front of anybody in the second half. We'll be shoring up some of the little things, and teaching consistency. We are extremely athletic, and we've just got to



Ellington's Mike Bontempo takes to the air for two points.

keep working on our decision-making, finding the proper shots, and executing on offense."

For more information, including complete schedules and results, visit [www.ciacsports.com](http://www.ciacsports.com).

For more photos, visit [www.courant.com/community/ellington](http://www.courant.com/community/ellington).



Issihjah Stephenson, of Windsor Locks, and Mike Bontempo, of Ellington, compete for a rebound.

## Meet Quincy!

Quincy is quite the mix- Blue Heeler, Border Collie, and Beagle! She loves learning and can't wait to show you all that she knows! She'd love a quiet home with dog savvy adults, no young kids, nice walks in the woods, and romps outside in the yard! At 7 years old, she'd prefer to be an only animal. She is crate trained and loves car rides! To learn more, please contact Our Companions at



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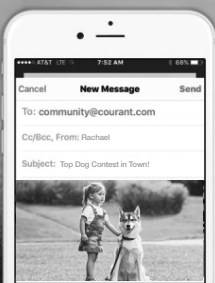
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compete for a rebound. **STEVE SMITH PHOTOS**



Windsor Locks' Jaydon Buckle gets crowded out of a shooting attempt by three Ellington defenders.



Jahieme Thomas, of Windsor Locks, takes a look at the bucket, as Ellington's Nicolas Monteleone closes in.



Ellington's Darren Zahner gets vertical and gets two points.



Windsor Locks' Jaydon Buckle carries the ball toward the hoop, against Ellington.



Malike Hassani takes a shot amidst a crowd of Ellington defenders.



**ADOPT ME!**

Tiger Lilly is a 7 month girl learning to trust people. She has made slow but great progress. Her favorite things are wet food, toys, catnip/treats and staring out the window on her cat tower.

She has done well with other cats and would do best with a home that has a mellow cat as a companion and someone to learn from.

Please consider giving this girl your time and patience as she would thrive after being shown love and comfort in your home.

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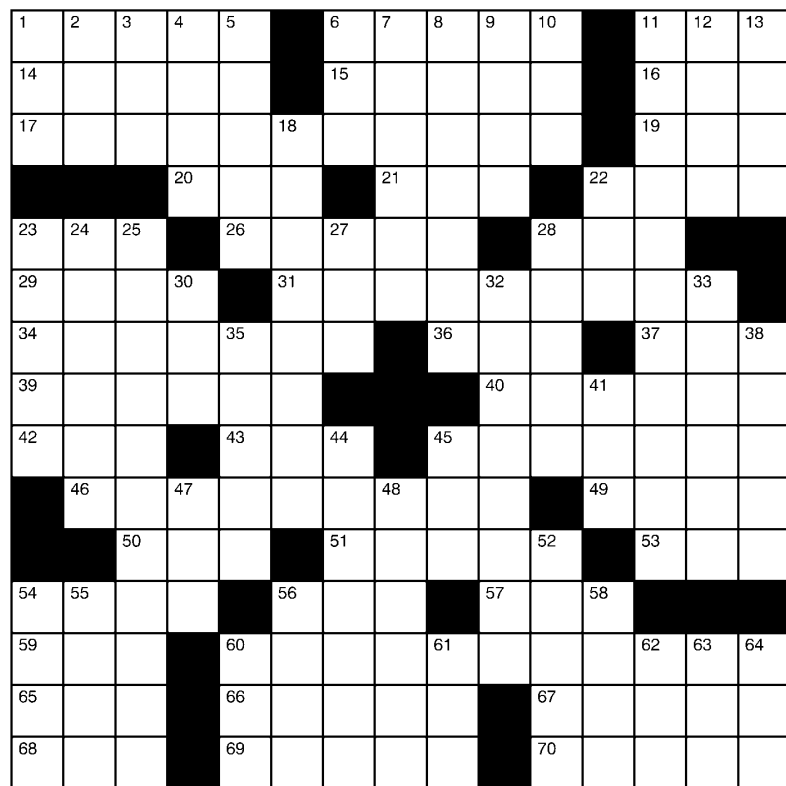


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**CROSSWORD** Solution located elsewhere in this section**Animal Hues**

CREATORS NEWS SERVICE

By Charles Preston

**ACROSS**

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14 Acclaim  
15 1944 Gene Tierney role  
16 A Gershwin  
17 Alice's wonderland lagomorph  
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39 Aesop, for one  
40 Platforms  
42 Dresden Ms.  
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- 45 Roosted  
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49 Companion of 37 Across  
50 Goddess of dawn  
51 Flavor  
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11 Mancini theme music  
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23 Unbending  
24 Steep slope  
25 Maeterlinck work  
27 Crop  
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30 HI, e.g.  
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35 Lends a hand  
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44 Fixed intention  
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64 Seabird

**Community News**

from Page 7

VERNON — The Friends of Rockville Public Library hope to hold their first meeting of 2022 on Thursday, Feb. 3, at noon in the first floor meeting room of the library, 52 Union St.

Guests are asked to provide their own lunch, drinks and snacks. Call the library at 860-875-5892 to find out the status of the meeting.

**Library presents programs on notable African-Americans**

AVON — WETHERSFIELD — The Wethersfield Library, 515 Silas Deane Highway, is hosting the following programs. Visit <https://www.wethersfieldlibrary.org/> or call 860-529-2665 for more information.

Black Citizenship in the Age of Jim Crow will take place virtually on Thursday, Feb. 17, from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. Email [library@wethersfieldlibrary.org](mailto:library@wethersfieldlibrary.org) to register. Based on the New York Historical Society's 2018-19 exhibition, this virtual program explores Black Americans' struggle for equality under the law from 1865 through WWI. Learn about both Southern and Northern roles in this dark chapter of history as well as the Black New Yorkers' organizing and community-building in the face of discrimination.

Connecticut's Inspiring African-American Women will take place virtually on Thursday, Feb. 24, from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. Email [library@wethersfieldlibrary.org](mailto:library@wethersfieldlibrary.org) to register. The Connecticut Women's Hall of Fame will present an interactive multimedia program about some of Connecticut's most remarkable African-American heroines.

**Gallery on the Green presents "Be Mine!" exhibit**

CANTON — Gallery on the Green will present a themed exhibition "Be Mine!" plus two solo shows by Stephanie Rogers and Susan Bradley from Friday, Feb. 11, through Saturday, March 12.

The gallery is located at 5 Canton Green Road. Call 860-693-4102 or visit [www.galleryonthegreen.org](http://www.galleryonthegreen.org) for more information.

**Nonprofit hosting 'Making College Work****While in Recovery'**

SIMSBURY — For most students, attending college is an exciting time, a time for gaining independence, making new friends, and transitioning into adulthood. For others, it can be overwhelming, especially for someone recovering from a substance use disorder.

To help families plan for a successful transition to college, the Simsbury nonprofit, A Promise to Jordan, will present "Making College Work While in Recovery", on Monday, Feb. 7, from 6 to 8 p.m.

The presentation will take place at The Barn at Covenant Presbyterian Church, 124 Old Farms Road, and all local restrictions with regard to the coronavirus pandemic will be followed. For anyone preferring to attend virtually, the presentation will also be available via Zoom.

The program will be led by Joel Singer, Ph.D., Founder and Managing Partner of Wayfinder Consulting. Singer is a former history teacher and varsity coach, as well as an academic and career consultant. Dr. Singer also leads the team currently providing life coaching services to individuals recovering from opioid use disorder through a program being offered by A Promise to Jordan.

Singer will advise attendees on how to have a traditional college experience while remaining abstinent, and keeping abstinence as the top priority while performing academically, as well as share campus resources and other tips. Visit [www.apromisetojordan.org](http://www.apromisetojordan.org) or email [info@apromisetojordan.org](mailto:info@apromisetojordan.org) for more information.

**First Church West Hartford calls first female senior pastor**

WEST HARTFORD — During a season of transitions at First Church, West Hartford, the excitement of the moment is that the town's 309-year-old Congregational Church has called Rev. Jane Willan as its 21st senior pastor.

"In its more than 300 year history First Church has seen lots of change and growth: five different meeting houses, 20 pastors, and several interim leaders, but never a female in the settled senior pastor position," said current church moderator Eleanor Wight. "We are very excited for this change, and we believe West Hartford is ready."

Rev. Willan delivered a Candidating Sermon at First Church on Jan. 9. Following worship, church members

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Community News

from Page 10

filled in ballots at a congregational meeting. One hundred and five people voted unanimously to extend the call to Rev. Willan. She will begin serving in her new role on Feb. 8.

In May of 2020, First Church assembled a Senior Pastor Search Committee of nine volunteers following the retirement of Rev. Dr. C. Geordie Campbell in January.

Under the guidance of interim Senior Pastor Rev. Erica Avena, Acting Associate Pastor Rev. Amie Giguere, Director of Worship Arts Jim Boratko, John P. Webster Library Director Jennifer deSima, Bridge Pastor Rev. Dr. Michael Newheart and others, the church continued to offer worship, support and programming though YouTube, phone, emails, and Zoom. Meanwhile the Search Committee began its work of updating the church profile.

“Due to the pandemic, our Search process was unlike any other. Our meetings and initial interviews were held entirely on Zoom,” said chairperson Suzanne Carnes. “We also visited other churches virtually to listen to sermons of potential candidates. Only finalists were scheduled for in-person interviews.”

The Search Committee first became acquainted with Rev. Willan at the end of September 2021 after they received her Ministerial Profile. Her profile was the 15th one they reviewed and stood out for several reasons. Rev. Willan shared her passion for social justice. She was among the first to officiate same sex marriages in Iowa.

Rev. Willan serves the wider church as a board member of the Central Massachusetts Association and the Board of Ministerial Aid. Within her own community, she is on the Board of Directors of Colony Retirement Homes.

Rev. Willan comes to First Church, West Hartford from within the United Church of Christ (UCC) Southern New England Conference. She was ordained in 2003 and has served congregations in Massachusetts and Iowa. Rev. Willan holds degrees from Hiram College, (Ohio) Boston University, and received her Master of Divinity from Vanderbilt Divinity School. She is no stranger to Connecticut, having worked in Simsbury early in her career, prior to her call to ministry.

“I was drawn to the First Church community by its strong use of technology, the community outreach,

the involvement with the Greater Hartford Interfaith Action Alliance (GHIAA) and the interfaith partnerships,” said Rev. Willan during one of four scheduled “meet and greet” sessions with the congregation Jan. 8.

Rev. Willan brings a wealth of knowledge about churches, is a self-proclaimed “numbers person,” and during the meet and greet she spoke of the need for a senior pastor to be empowering while nurturing the community she serves.

When asked what she will bring to the congregation in West Hartford, “one thing that bothers me is when a church says, ‘we need to attract more young families.’ I don’t think, as a church, we attract. What we need to do is be a welcoming place for all people, and the growth will come.”

Rev. Willan likes to spend her spare time with her husband Don, their dog, Moses and cat, Winifred. She enjoys writing fiction and is the author of the Sister Agatha and Father Selwyn Mystery Series. She and Don will be relocating to Connecticut in the near future.

Special Olympics presents Penguin Plunge events statewide

STATEWIDE — Registration is open for Special Olympics Connecticut’s upcoming Penguin Plunge events. Visit soct.org for more information.

Participants in the Plunge will jump into the chilly waters of a lake or Long Island Sound to support the organization’s year-round sports, health and fitness programs for athletes around the state and help create communities that accept and include people of all abilities.

Visit soct.org, email specialolympicsct@soct.org or call 203-230-1201 for more information. Upcoming Penguin Plunge events include the Farmington Penguin Plunge at Winding Trails on Sunday, Feb. 13; the Middletown Penguin Plunge at the Polish Falcons Club on Saturday, Feb. 26; the Shoreline Penguin Plunge at Ocean Beach Park in New London on Sunday, March 6; the Fairfield Penguin Plunge at Jennings Beach on Saturday, April 2; and Plunge at the Park at Wolfe Park in Monroe on Saturday, April 2.



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**LEGAL NOTICE**  
**TOWN OF WILLINGTON REVENUE COLLECTOR’S NOTICE**

To the taxpayers of the Town of Willington – the second installment of the taxes listed on the October 1, 2020 Grand List and the Motor vehicle supplemental tax becomes due and payable to the Town of Willington on January 1, 2022. Payments must be postmarked, paid online, or brought to our office by February 1, 2022 to avoid an interest charge. Interest will be charged on all delinquent bills at a rate of 1 ½% per month from the due date of January 1<sup>st</sup>, with a minimum charge of \$2 for each bill. All Tax bills under \$3 have been waived.

We encourage you to pay online at [www.willingtonct.org](http://www.willingtonct.org) (with fee), mail payment to our office, or drop payment in one of our drop boxes located outside the Town Office Building’s front entrance. Our hours are Monday’s 12:30 pm – 7:30 pm, Tuesday’s – Friday’s 9:00 am – 2:00 pm. We will be closed Monday January 17<sup>th</sup> in observance of Martin Luther King Day.

If you have any questions, please contact our office at 860-487-3111.

Failure to receive a bill does not invalidate the tax or interest per CT State Statute.

Janice C. Clauson  
Willington Revenue Collector  
40 Old Farms Rd  
Willington, CT 06279

**LEGAL NOTICE**  
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**I asked what kind of family Amina wanted. She said, 'A family like yours.' That's when I knew I had to adopt her.**

**Denise, adopted 17-year-old Amina**



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# Hyundai's lively 3-door

By William Heald  
Special to Courant Community

Having a type of car in your lineup that no other manufacturer offers is getting to be a very unusual thing, and to be honest offering just a compact coupe is becoming rare thanks to the country's current attachment to pickups and SUVs.

But in the Veloster, Hyundai has created a unique, 3-door compact sport coupe that is not only stylish but quite versatile as well (and very fuel efficient).

A 3-door, you ask? Indeed, access to the back seat is eased though a rear door on the passenger side of the Veloster, which is so beautifully integrated into the bodywork that you might miss it if you're not aware it's there.

This is but one reason why this is a very cool little coupe that exudes its own special personality.

Thanks to the popularity of SUV these days, the Veloster is only available in one trim level for 2022-the Veloster N. This is the performance model, and features a number of tweaks to make it very entertaining to drive.

Built on a 104.3-inch wheelbase, the front-drive Veloster N is powered by a Theta turbocharged 2-liter inline four with 275 horsepower with a choice of two gearboxes, a 6-speed manual or an 8-speed dual clutch automatic. 275 ponies is decent thrust for such a light car (3260 lbs.), and there are three drive modes (Normal, Eco and Sport) plus a special N selector that offers three performance settings. The modes adjust 7 different chassis and drive-train responses, to fine-tune the driving

experience.

The engine is strong but peaky when the turbocharger fully spins up and delivers a hit of power that some will find exhilarating. The handling is razor sharp but the ride is a bit on the stiff side, largely to the 19-inch wheels which have a very shallow profile.

All in all it's a fun coupe to hustle around, and its compact size makes scooting through heavy traffic (and parking) a breeze.

Very substantial front discs make short order of hard braking, filling out which is a satisfying performance portfolio.

The interior of the Veloster is much as you might expect from a compact coupe in that it is cozy, but Hyundai has done a great job of making this limited space habitable (and roomier than you might expect). The front buckets are heavily bolstered for great lateral support and feature a lighted "N" logo as well as both fabric and leather inserts. The instrument cluster is a welcome traditional analog affair, with top marks in both legibility and a simple, logical layout.

Visibility is limited as with most compact coupes, but blind spot warning is standard and very welcome on all cars but especially this one. The rear seats, made easier to access through the passenger side rear door, offer decent room for average size adults with the only tight spot being foot-room (and the front seats are intrusive when they are accommodating large humans).

The 2022 Hyundai Veloster N is EPA rated 20 MPG city/27 highway and since our tester had no optional equipment, the sticker came to \$35,005.

[www.hyundai.com](http://www.hyundai.com)



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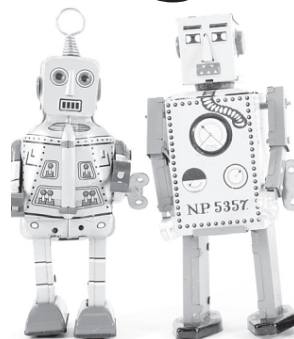
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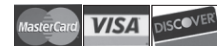
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## How to get a healthier home for under \$100



(BPT) - It's as crystal clear as the air and water can be in your home: living in a healthier space is a top priority. From small projects to large remodels, homeowners are focused on how these upgrades might impact their health, while having a positive impact on the environment.

"Going green can be affordable when there are eco-friendly choices available no matter your budget," said Christopher O'Rourke, Mercury Insurance Vice President of Property Claims. "Healthy home choices, especially for large renovations, may bring your homeowners cost down and save you money on insurance too."

A healthier home starts with evaluating what needs routine maintenance and what products can be replaced with eco-friendly alternatives. Here are some healthy home improvement tips that you can begin with today.

### 1) Clean, fresh and safe air

According to the EPA, the air inside your home can be two to five times more polluted than the air outside. Air filters in your heating and cooling system work by drawing out pollutants like dust and pet dander. When they get dirty it makes it harder for this system to work efficiently. Routinely check your air filters for accumulated dirt and dust. Depending on what type of filter you need, HEPA filters can be replaced for as little as \$25.

A simple project you can do at no cost is checking that all smoke and carbon monoxide detectors in your home work properly. Heating your home during winter increases the risk of fire and carbon monoxide poisoning. Checking the detectors around your home should be done routinely, especially during cold weather months.

### 2) Pure water

Water filters are a popular health-conscious home upgrade that can fit a range of budgets. The most popular types of water filtration are filtered pitchers that can start at \$20. There are also under-the-sink, on-the-counter, and faucet-mounted filtration system alternatives depending on how large of an upgrade you want.

Water leak detection devices are another popular home improvement. These systems can notify you when a leak is detected and can shut off the water system if a major problem is found. Mercury Insurance offers a water leak detection discount to qualifying homes that are equipped with these systems. (Discount availability may be limited to certain states. Speak to a Mercury agent to confirm the coverages available in your state.)

### 3) Home supplies that are great at their jobs and easy on the environment

Over the years many consumers have been concerned about the ingredients found in conventional cleaning products, paints, flooring and building materials. Many have decided to replace them with products that are environmentally friendly. Look for products that are biodegradable and sourced from renewable resources instead of petroleum. Be wary of cleaners that claim to be all natural without clearly identifying their environmental benefits.

**Painting:** Whether you are doing a light touch up around your home or a large project, toxic paint could negatively impact the air quality of your living space. Look for options that are free of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) or are Green Seal or GreenGuard certified.

**Replacing appliances:** Always look for appliances that are LEED certified or STAR rated. These products are more sustainable and reduce energy usage. You may also qualify for a green homeowners discount through your insurance for having these appliances in your home.

**Flooring:** Look for eco-friendly options such as unfinished hardwood, stone or concrete, and carpets made of natural fibers. Make sure to use toxic-free adhesives to reduce the amount of chemicals in your home.

**Building materials:** If you are going to be replacing drywall or insulation, look for GreenGuard certified materials to avoid toxic chemicals such as formaldehyde or acetaldehyde that are commonly found in these materials.

Home improvements and routine maintenance can create a healthier living environment. This green trend is also good for your wallet, as Mercury Insurance will apply a 5% green home insurance discount to homeowners who provide proof of certification that their home has been certified as Green by the U.S. Green Building Council LEED for homes rating system or meets the requirements of the National Association of Home Builders Green Building Guidelines (NAHB). (Discount availability may be limited to certain states. Speak to a Mercury agent to confirm the coverages available in your state.)



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